SIX RULES FOR THE NEW HOME GARDENER

The "plant-it-yourself" trend in home gardening has grown rapidly in recent years, according to the American Association of Nurserymen. Many more home owners are poring over catalogues for tips on planting and beautifying their yards.

The following six rules designed to assure both happier gardening and more beautiful properties, are promulgated by the Association:

1. Start with a good plan. It is often said that "it is not a home until it is planted" but it is just as true that "beauty is planned." Usually a rough drawing to scale of the property, showing size of lot, shape and height of buildings, as well as locations of walks and drives and other permanent features, can be taken to a landscape nurseryman who will show what and where to plant.

2. Plant one area at a time according to the plan, getting the "feel" of what you want as you go along.

3. Take advantage of the natural features of your landscape by standing in different locations and observing the rest of the property for spots that need a touch of color or evergreen treatment or screen to shut out the least desirable view, etc.

4. Plant things that do not require much maintenance.

5. At the same time give proper care to what you already have planted, as you proceed with your planting plan.

6. Consult with other successful home gardeners in your neighborhood, and observe their properties for hints you can use.

The gradual planting and beautifying of the home property can be an enjoyable pasttime for the whole family. Outdoor living can be much more delightful in a planted setting of roses, flowering shrubs of many kinds, as well as flowering and fruiting trees, with open spaces of good lawn. It is not only a luxuriant way to live, but more healthful, comfortable and satisfying.

CLOVER SEED IS IN SHORT SUPPLY

This year there's a shortage of red and alsike clover seed and farmers must decide during the next few weeks how they're going to meet the problem.

Agronomists at VPI Agricultural Extension Service say actually the seed supply of the two legumes is the smallest in years, about 80% of average. They suggest substituting other legumes to make up for the shortage of red and alsike clover seed. Fortunately supplies of ladino and most varieties of alfalfa adapted to Virginia are abundant enough to help fill the need. Farmers are urged to talk with their county agents early to get specific recommendations on suitable legume mixtures that can be planted this spring.

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Chick Chats

EFFICIENCY IN POULTRY RAISING

Even in a good year, some poultrymen lose money while, in a poor year, there are always some who make money. The reason for this is, to a large extent, efficiency of operation.

There are many factors other than rate of growth and production that enter into the efficiency of producing poultry-size of the business layout and arrangement of poultry quarters, planning of the work routine. Some of these are so obvious as to be overlooked.

Owners of large flocks have an advantage over owners of small flocks. As the number of birds increases, many of the chores do not increase in proportion. It takes as much time to walk to the poultry house to feed 50 hens as it does to feed 500. So, as the flock gets larger, the chore time spent per bird is shorter and the cost of care per bird is less.

Better Margin

This allows owners of large flocks to have a more favorable margin between costs and prices received. Also, large-scale producers can buy and sell at more favorable prices than can small flockowners because of volume discounts and credits. Investment in buildings and equipment usually does not increase as rapidly as does increases in size of businesss.

The small operator, therefore, must make his operation as efficient as possible to compete with the large-scale producer. He must get a maximum return for his efforts.

The number of trips made to the laying house can sometimes be reduced by doing more jobs on each trip. Jobs such as feeding the flock and gathering eggs should be combined.

Needs Planning

The poultry buildings should be consolidated and well arranged. The nests should be located near the door (the hens have more time to carry eggs than you do.) Feeders should be placed in line for easy filling. The feed supply should be conveniently located.

Automatic waterers are a big timesaver. A good automatic feeder, coupled with bulk storage of the feed, will save many hours of hard work. An overhead conveyor for feed is a labor saver.

A good poultryman should continually examine his chore routine to see if there are better, quicker and easier ways of doing a job. He should consider that his time is worth money, just as if he paid himself an hourly salary to care for the flock.

QUICK DO-AHEAD MAIN DISHES

One good main dish, and plenty of it, is the answer for a hungry family or easy entertaining.

For instance, Miss Janet Cameron, nutritionist at VPI, suggests "ham cheese dandy." You'll need 8 slices bread, 1 cup ground cooked ham, 1/4 pound butter, 1/2 pound sharp cheese grated, 4 slight. ly beaten eggs, 1 teaspoon salt, a dash of red pepper. Remove crust from bread. Mix butter with ground ham; spread on bread, and arrange slices in a shallow baking dish. Scald milk, stir in cheese, eggs and seasoning. Pour this sauce over the bread, cover the dish and place in refrigerator overnight or for several hours, so bread absorbs the sauce. One hour before meal time, bake at 300 degrees for about an hour. This is puffy and best if served at once.

CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH WEEK

There are some 300 million dental cavities in children and the backlog is increasing at the rate of about 40 million a year. The toll of dental disease is a particular tragedy because the knowledge to reduce the high incidence of tooth decay is at hand, according to Dr. David R. Wallace, Director of the State Health Department's Division of Dental Health.

Dr. Wallace issued this statement in observance of National Children's Dental Health Week, February 7-13.

One of the chief reasons for the decay toll is the heavy consumption of sweets, he said. Sweets are readily fermentable and offer a good nutrient for bacteria to manufacture enamel-destroying acid.

Dr. Wallace urged that parents offer fruit or popcorn or cheese to children instead of jams and pastries for between-meal snacks.

The ritual of toothbrushing is still one of the most effective methods of preventing decay, Dr. Wallace said. He added that the brushing should be done immediately after eating rather than on arising in the morning or retiring at night.

"In addition to the toothbrush, flouridation of water promises to help reduce substantially throughout a lifetime the dental crippling that now plagues the adult generation," Dr. Wallace said.

Twenty-seven communities in Virginia now have added flourides to their water supplies at a cost of less than 15 cents per person per year he reported.

For those areas where a public water supply is not available, children can be protected in part by the application of a flouride solution directly to their teeth in the dentist's chair, Dr. Wallage suggested.

He recommended that the first series of treatments be given at about age three and others at ages seven, ten and 13 to catch new teeth as they appear.

"As part of the preventive program, children should be taken to the dentist as soon as their first teeth are in," Dr. Wallace said.

The dentist and the young patient can thus become acquainted under favorable circumstances, free of any discomfort. This type of introduction is better, happier and more productive than one in which the child is suffering from a toothache caused by dental neglect, he added.

INCREASED DEER KILL EAST OF BLUE RIDGE

C. F. Phelps, chief of the Game Division of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, reports that while not all the deer tags are in for the deer and turkey season ending January 5 and 20 respectively east of the Blue Ridge, enough have been received to indicate that the deer kill during the past season statewide was considerably in excess of that for the previous season.

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